

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

[411]

LONDON, SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 1818.

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TO
HENRY HUNT, ESQ.

LETTER III.*

ON THE TERRIBLE SCENES, EXHIBITED
AT DERBY IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER,
1817; AND PARTICULARLY
ON THE CONDUCT OF LAWYER
CROSS OF MANCHESTER.

*M'Allister's Tavern, near Harrisburgh,
in the State of Pennsylvania, 28th
January, 1818.*

MY DEAR HUNT,

If any thing could make me, for one single twenty four hours, lose sight of my country and its wrongs, it assuredly would be that which has passed under my view since the 9th of this present month, when I left Long Island on my way to *Harrisburgh*, on a business, with regard to which you shall receive full information in a future letter, seeing that it is of great importance, as a matter closely connected with the cause of general freedom.

Over a space of more than two hundred miles, passing through the city of New York; through a list of towns in the State of New Jersey; then crossing the Delaware into Pennsylvania; stopping some days to see my old friends at Bustletown and Philadelphia, at which latter place I was with

our excellent friend *Hulme*, who begs to be most kindly remembered to you; leaving Philadelphia, and passing through a most beautiful country, studded with neat towns and villages, and with farm-houses, barns, and homesteads, such as I never before saw, and of which, without actually seeing them, I could have formed no idea: over all this space; amongst all these various scenes, I have never seen a beggar, nor have I seen, or heard of, a single person in distress. The *skirts* of the towns are not, as in England, rendered loathsome and dismal by miserable habitations. *All* the buildings are good; and *all* the people well-fed and well-clothed. But, then, here are no *Parks*; no *big mansions* of Borough-mongers; no *Parsonage Houses*.

Harrisburgh, which lies about a hundred miles from Philadelphia, was *laid out* only about thirty years ago; and, it now contains a population nearly equal to that of *Winchester*; but, then, this population consists not of droves of Priests and droves of soldiers. Here is neither a Royal College, nor a Barrack. Being a situation convenient for the purpose, this town is now the place where the *Legislatures* of the State assembles. My business being with that body, and requiring *time* to bring it to a close, I have retired to this place, in order to be quiet, and to proceed in the discharge of my duty towards my oppressed and insulted countrymen.

The spot, where I am at this mo-

* The two former Letters to Mr. Hunt appeared in Nos. 1 and 3 of the present Volume.

ment, is the most delightful that my eyes ever beheld. It is at once the most rich and the most romantic. From one side of my room I look out into a farm yard, full of fodder and of cattle, sheep, hogs, and multitudes of poultry, while, at a few paces beyond the yard, runs the river Susquehannah, which is wider than the Thames and has innumerable islands lying in it, from a quarter of an acre to five or six acres in extent. From the other side of my room I look into an Orchard of Apples and Peaches of forty acres, lying in a narrow valley, which runs up between two mountains, about a quarter of a mile high, formed precisely like the ridge of a house, the gable ends being towards the river. These mountains are covered with woods. Last night it rained: it froze before morning, and the frost caught the drops hanging upon the trees; so that the sun, which is now shining as bright as in England in the month of May, exhibits these icicles in countless millions of sparkling diamonds.

It is not, however, my dear Hunt, in the power of such scenes, nor in the greater power of reflection on the growing population and wonderful improvement of these immense regions: it is not in the power of these, or of any other thing that can engage my sight or occupy my mind, to withdraw, for one day, that mind from England, or to render less dear to my heart her happiness, her freedom and renown. On the contrary, all that I here behold, connected with man, I trace back to England. Here is the language of England; here are the laws of England; sheriffs, judges, juries; all has its origin from England. And, while I reflect with pride, that these wonderful things have been effected by Englishmen, I cannot help remembering, that those Englishmen were as foully calumniated by Corruption in their day as you and I now are; and that, if WILLIAM PENN was preserved to found this happy and flourishing State of Pennsylvania, he was so preserved by an English Jury, who,

when he was falsely accused of *sedition* and *blasphemy*, snatched him from the fangs of a prostituted Attorney General and a savage Judge.

If, in contemplating the destinies of this boundless country (boundless in products as well as extent), I could discover the smallest ground for apprehending a cause of diminution in the power of England, such contemplation would be far other than gratifying to my mind. But, I discover no such ground. For, though, compared to this, our country is but a mere speck, still her geographical situation, the manageableness of her means, and, above all things, the character of her people, their industry, their warmth of heart, their vigour of intellect, their public-spirit, and their matchless attachment to the fame and even the very name of their country, will always keep England at the head of the nations of the world. Corruption may enfeeble her, and internal tyranny bow her down for a while. But, after a short space, she will rise again; and, if need be, she will, as she has done heretofore, fell her domestic and her foreign foes at one and the same blow.

I have, my dear Hunt, the little thatched cottages of Waltham Chase and of Botley Common now full in my mind's eye, and I feel at this day, with more force than ever, that passion, which would make me prefer the occupation of the meanest of those most humble abodes, accompanied with the character of Englishman, to the mastership over, and the actual possession of, all that I have above described, unaccompanied with that character. As I said, when I left England, so I still say, that I never can like any people so well as I like the people of England. As it is in the hour of a child's bodily or mental suffering that it becomes nearer and dearer to the parent's heart: so it is in the hour, when they are insolently and cruelly treated, that our more defenceless countrymen become objects of our most anxious solicitude. And, as this is the case generally, so in descending to particulars, we feel the

greatest degree of anxiety on account of those individuals, who happen to be placed in the greatest peril. You will, therefore, I am sure, have anticipated, that the poor men at DERBY had their full share of my anxious feelings. I have felt all that man can feel on their account; and I hope, that, like yourself, I shall yet be able to give proof of those feelings in a way more marked and memorable than that of making professions.

I have now the writings of *Stewart* and of *Stoddart* before me on the table. Their false accusations; their excitements to shed innocent blood; their sanguinary exhortations; their strenuous efforts to stifle all the feelings of compassion and compunction; their savage exultations at the shedding of blood: all these I have before me, and, I trust, that the day is yet to come, when these very identical papers will be produced in legal accusation against these atrocious men, the equal of whom have never been seen in the world since the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Long before these papers arrived, we were informed of the intention of trying the Derby rioters for *High Treason*. An English gentleman, who had been unwilling to give up Sir Francis Burdett, was at my house some time ago. We were talking about the scheme for trying the men at Derby. The gentleman is a Derbyshireman. It became a question with me, whether Sir Francis, whose principal estates are in Derbyshire, would think it his duty to quit his Irish revelry, and go into his county to be present at the awful array against the defenceless men, who were about to be tried. This was a question with me; but, it was no question with my Derbyshire friend, who declared, without hesitation, that it was "going a little "too far" to affect to suppose it possible, that Sir Francis would not be present! Alas! the very papers that bring us the account of the Derby Tragedy, inform us, that Sir Francis's dancing and feasting in Ireland were

still going merrily on; but, they also inform us, and to my inexpressible satisfaction, that YOU were at Derby during the trials!

As the men were to be tried by *Special Commission*, it was very clear, that they could not have the means of bringing down *counsel* to a distance of nearly *two hundred miles*, and that, unless aided by the purse of some one, they would have no counsel, except such as might be **ASSIGNED THEM BY THE JUDGES!** This turned out to be the fact. Sir Francis Burdett ought to have aided the men upon this occasion; or, he ought now to cease to talk about his anxiety for liberty and justice. But, I shall speak of this more fully by and by.

To go into any particular observations on the nature of the charge against the men, who have been executed; or, to dwell upon the general design and intention of the Borough-mongers upon this occasion; these would be useless, seeing that there is not one man, woman, or child in the kingdom, who does not clearly understand the whole matter. I shall, therefore, confine myself, in this Letter, chiefly to the conduct of MR. CROSS, and more particularly to what, during his "*defence*" of the prisoners, he said about me.

It appears, that there were no less than *ten* lawyers employed *against* the prisoners, the Attorney and Solicitor General included! *Ten!* To be paid each a lumping sum out of the *taxes*! Amongst these was that very *Serjeant Copley*, who had *defended* Dr. Watson and his associates, who, it appears, had been *retained generally* by the government as soon as that trial was over! What chance can a *poor* man have in a state of things such as this? If the government be allowed, without any overhauling, to retain and *pay*, all the able lawyers, how is any man to be defended, whom that government may choose to prosecute? What are the "*Crown Lawyers*" for, if others be to be employed to carry on *Crown* prosecutions, and if these others be to

be paid out of the public money? Will Sir Francis Burdett move for an account of the sums thus expended to purchase up lawyers in order to prevent prosecuted men from having legal assistance? No: or he would have done this, as he was besought to do, many years ago. Of what avail, then, are big talk and loud railing, if nothing to the point is ever to be done? Not less, I verily believe, than *half a million of money* has been given to lawyers for aid in Crown Prosecutions, since I became acquainted with Sir Francis Burdett; but, never has he once taken the trouble to open his lips, *in the House*, upon this important matter. If an account of the money thus expended were once before the public, the loyalty, the "excessive loyalty," of the Bar would no longer be a subject of wonder, any more than the loyalty of Castles, Dowling, Reynolds, Oliver, Stewart, Stoddart, and the like. But, such an account will never be laid before the public 'till *you* or I shall be in parliament, however long it may be before that shall happen.

Against these *ten* well paid and well fed brothers of the long robe, who was there to defend the prisoners? Why, *two* men appointed by the Judges! And, who were they? Mr. Cross, a country lawyer, living at Manchester, and a Mr. DENMAN, who, be he what he may, was never before heard of in any great cause. Why might not Mr. Wetherell and Mr. Brougham have been appointed? Why these two almost unknown men against *ten* Crown Lawyers? If I had been the Judge, I should have appointed *ten*; or, at least, if I had stopped at two, they should have been two of the most able, most experienced, and most respectable that I could find.

The men, who were to be tried, had *no money*. All who dared to open lips in their defence, or in mitigation of their conduct, were set down as abettors of treason. They had nobody to consult with. They were in close confinement. They were suffered to read no public papers. You

were, by that bloody man, STODDART, denominated a "miscreant" because you "dared" to show your face at Derby. And, it was in this state, that these poor men were put on their trial, and that their defence was committed to two *assigned counsel*!

CROSS, who was the leading counsel on the assigned side, shaped his defence in this way: He accused me of stimulating the poor in general to commit treason; and then he said, that his clients had been *stimulated by me*, and had, unhappily, *yielded to the stimulation*! This attack, though I despise it as far as it can affect myself, must not be passed lightly over, seeing that it was made the means of assisting in taking away the lives of some of our countrymen. The words, as I find them reported in the COURIER news-paper, were as follows:—"In the course of this examination he (Mr. Cross) took occasion to allude to the grinding state of misery to which the poor of this country were reduced at the conclusion of the late war. At that period, he said, there was a class of men, far different from the unfortunate conspirators, of whom the prisoner was stated to be a member; these men lost no opportunity—wickedly, artfully, and with the worst designs, of instilling into the minds of the poor a hatred of the government of the country, which they took occasion to assert was the sole cause of the miseries and privations which existed. To one of these men he could not but allude—he meant the individual who sent into the world an Address to the journeymen and labouring classes of this country. This diabolical publication was sent forth at a period when distress was most prevalent, and was followed up by others not less detestable and atrocious. He here read some of the Advertisements from Cobbett's publication, in which it was stated that 44,000 of a certain Number had been sold. Why such poison was suffered to be circulated with impunity?"

"nity, he could not but *ask his Majesty's Attorney General*, and the *Magistracy of the County*. He admitted that the novelty of such publications might have *a little puzzled* the Magistrates; but *he trusted* they would in future attend to that advice which had been *so wisely given by Lord Sidmouth*, namely, that where they found the *nuisance* to exist, they would use the power with which they were invested for *abating it*. He had *no hesitation*, however, in asserting, that to these *abominable publications* all the mischiefs which had accrued were attributable."

Thus, then, this able defender, this zealous advocate, has *no hesitation* to ascribe all the mischiefs of the riot in the North to me! I could have no hesitation in calling him a base and *detestable slanderer*; but, I will not answer naked assertion by naked assertion. It is well known that the main drift of my *Address to the Journey-men and Labourers* and of my other publications following that *Address*, I say it is well known, and the contents of those publications will *prove* it, that the main drift of them was to *prevent riot and acts of violence of all sorts*. It is well known, that, while the papers in the pay of the government, were goading on the poor to assail the shops of Bakers and Butchers and the barns and stacks of Farmers, I was using my paper so as to prevent these and all other acts of unlawful violence. At the time when I began to address myself more immediately to the Labouring Classes, there had been riots in Cambridgeshire, ending in a terrible series of executions. There had been riots in Wales. There had recently been riots in Somersetshire, in Surrey, in Monmouthshire, in Suffolk. Riots were hourly expected in Staffordshire and Lancashire. And, in Nottinghamshire and the neighbouring counties, there had been rioting going on for more than five years, which, with all its new and terrific powers, the

government, with an army and a band of spies to assist it, had been unable to suppress.

This was the state of things, when the *Cheap Register* first made its appearance. An hostility to the use of *machines* was one ground of these riots. A mistaken notion in the mass of the Labouring Classes led them to attack and destroy property of that description. I, therefore, at the risk of loss of popularity, or, rather, trusting to the good sense of the people, bent all the force of my mind against this erroneous notion; I proved to them, that machines were beneficial to them as well as to their country generally; I proved to them, that they could not be benefitted by the destruction of machines; I proved to them, that Bakers, Butchers, Millers and Farmers could *not be benefitted by high prices*; I proved to them, that *riot must make matters worse*. And, the effect, the wonderful effect was, that all riot and disposition to riot *ceased throughout the kingdom*, though the misery of the people had been increasing all the while. These facts are well known; they are recorded in the publications themselves, which publications will be read with delight ages after the carcass of this Manchester Lawyer shall have been food for maggots, and after his name shall have been forgotten, except as far as my exposure and reprobation of him shall tend to perpetuate a recollection of it. True it is, indeed, that his memory will *live*; and so does that of Judas Iscariot.

From the very first appearance of the *Cheap Register*, until the passing of the *Absolute-Power-of-Imprisonment Act* and the *Gagging and New Treason Laws*, not a riot took place in any part of the kingdom, except at one place in Scotland, where the people had been *too loyal* to permit any Meeting for Reform. There the people rioted and broke open Bakers' and Grocers' shops. But, the moment that the *Dungeon and Gagging-Laws* were passed, rioting began. When

the people, in answer to their humble petitions, were menaced with the dungeon and the gallows; then they, of course, ceased to have any hope from a peaceable and supplicating line of conduct. This, no one will deny, is a true state of the case; and, this being a true state of the case, it follows, of course, that the Manchester Lawyer has been guilty of the foulest of calumny.

But, he said, that I represented *the government* as the *sole cause* of the sufferings of the people. And, *what of that?* I did not advise them to remove the cause by *force*. I advised them to act *lawfully*. I advised them to *petition* the Parliament for redress. And, was this acting a seditious part? I inculcated a love of country and an adherence to its constitution. Was this acting a seditious part? Did this tend to the destruction of all law and all property? To be sure, I did say, as Mr. PRESTON had said in print before me, that the government took, in taxes, more than one half of the earnings of every Journeyman and every labourer; and, all that I did in addition to what had been done by Mr. PRESTON, was this; I *proved the truth* of what he had barely asserted. Now, Mr. PRESTON is not only a man of considerable *estate*, but also a *lawyer*, and a *Member of Parliament* into the bargain. Why did our Manchester Scut not fall upon Mr. PRESTON, then? If I misled the people, Mr. Preston must have misled me. If my statement was "*wicked, artful, de-testable, atrocious, diabolical*," was his statement harmless? Either Scut Caoss had read my Address, or he had not: if the latter, he was speaking, he was vomiting out, his calumny at random; and, if he had read it, he must have seen, that the main part of it, as far as related to the weight of taxes, rested upon the authority of Mr. PRESTON. But, it suited him better to confine his calumny to me.

However, the statement was, at any rate, *true*; and it is now true. Out

of every 18 shillings, earned by the journeyman and labourer, the government takes *ten shilling* in taxes. This has, it seems, been repeated in a pamphlet by some friend of Mr. COKE, with the slight change of *eight shillings* instead of *ten shillings*. The COURIER complains, that this is "*believed by the deluded people.*" Oh, no! They *were* deluded until they did believe it. Satisfied as I was, before I left England, that the miserable condition of the working classes arose *solely* from the burdens imposed on them by the government, the thing was not so clearly visible to me as it has been made by my observation in America. Here, except in the great towns on the coast, where unfortunate emigrants arrive *ill*, or afflicted in some particular way, there are *no poor*. There is now-and-then an aged or infirm person who stands in need of help, or, orphans, left, by some singular misfortune, in a state of distress. These are kindly treated and most liberally provided for. But, with these exceptions, there are *no poor*, or what we call *poor* in England. And, what is the reason of this? Why, that taxes are almost unknown. We have no taxes upon houses, lands, carriages, horses, dogs, servants, windows, fuel, stamps, candles, soap, leather, hops, malt, beer. We have no direct tax worth naming. All that a farmer in Long Island pays for support of government, poor, roads, and schools, does not exceed *three half-pence sterling an acre on his land*, though the land be his own. And this is all that he pays, though his fields and his orchards may be worth, in the fee simple, from fifty to seventy pounds sterling an acre including his buildings. Here is *no excise*. The farmer grows his own hops, and makes his own malt, if he chooses. He makes his own soap and candles. There is a duty on goods *imported*; but still, tea, sugar, coffee, and all other articles, are far cheaper than in England. The *salt*, the *very salt*, for which the English labourer pays *twenty*

shillings a bushel, is brought to this country and sold to the American labourer at *two shillings and sixpence* a bushel. The labourer here receives a dollar, or four shillings and sixpence, for his day's work, one time with another, and he buys his hog-meat (a whole hog, corn-fatted) at *five-pence sterling a pound*. Here are *eleven pounds* of hog-meat, the fruit of one single day's labour; and if a man has not this labour every day, it is his own fault. Good strong beer may be brewed for about *two-pence sterling a quart*. That bread is cheaper than in England must be the case, as flour is carried to England from America. What a difference is here, then! *You* know very well (for nobody has paid more attention to the matter), that our poor, trodden-down labourers, do not earn, and cannot earn, or, at least, they cannot get, *two pounds of hog-meat* for a day's work; and, indeed, you know, that they scarcely ever smell to meat of any kind.

And what is the *cause* of this difference? What cause can there be other than the *taxes imposed and extorted* in England? The American master, having hardly any taxes to pay, can sell his produce cheap and give *high wages* to his journeymen or labourers; and, when the money comes into their hands, they can purchase a great deal with it. Hence it is, that there are *no riots* here. There are *no combinations or conspiracies*. There need no dungeons or gagging bills. No standing army is wanted, because the people, knowing that they are free and happy, are always ready to defend their country themselves, as they did in their late war against our Boroughmongers, who certainly intended to give, in this country, the last stab to the freedom of the world. You remember well, that I used to say, that, while this country remained independent, the Boroughmongers never could be safe; never could sleep sound; never could have one moment of real repose. And, depend upon it,

they never will. *Scut Cross* should, therefore, have attacked *this country*. He should have exclaimed against this dangerous example of general ease, plenty, and content, growing out of a free choice of the People in the filling of their Legislative Assemblies. No doubt, that there would be men here, very willing to sack the People's money, through the means of pensions and sinecures and enormous salaries and civil lists. No doubt, there would be men, very willing to have a fine brilliant Staff and a Standing Army, together with shoals of taxgatherers. But, the people take care that no such men shall have any thing to say in public matters. The people *really choose their law-makers*; and this it is, and *this alone*, which makes them live in plenty and content.

However, it is useless to dwell longer on topics of this kind. The English People are fully convinced, that all their miseries arise immediately from the cruel pressure of the hand of taxation; and that that hand can never be rendered less oppressive without a Reform of the Parliament. Lawyer Cross may continue to bawl, and the traitors of the press may continue to instigate to the shedding of innocent blood; but, never will they remove from the minds of the People of England, this all-important truth, that the nation can never see one single day of happiness, until the Members of the Commons' House be chosen by *the Commons*, and not by the Lords.

The Manchester Lawyer was mistaken, when he stated the *number* published of the particular Register, to which he referred. At one time, indeed, that number was 44,000; and, I remember, that, when I announced the fact, I added: "Let Corruption "rub that out, if she can!" You, who were present, during the speech of this fellow, can tell me, whether he *read* this little codicil to the advertisement. Pray write to me and tell me. Oh, no! It was not 44,000 of *that* Register. It was, before I left England,

more than *two hundred thousand* in town and country. And, does Lawyer Cross think, that this is to be rubbed out by any abuse, or any cant, from his lips! Does he, or his employers and co-operators, think that this is to be rubbed out by prosecutions, or by hangings and quarterings! Is the publication *false in fact*, or is it *fallacious in reasoning*? Why do they not prove it, then, by means of the *press*, and not resort to gags, dungeons, halters, axes, and quartering-knives? This Lawyer, taking up the strain of William Gifford and Southey and Stewart and Stoddart, blamed the Attorney General for not having *put a stop* to the circulation of "such *poison*." This is a very stale trick: very stale indeed! It has long been the custom for the hirelings of the *press* to *censure* the "Law-Officers" for their *lenity* and *remissness* in such cases. And, upon this particular occasion, the London hirelings appear to have caught the hint from their fellow-labourer at Derby. They, too, cry out afresh: "poison! poison! "prosecute! prosecute!" Prosecute; the fools! *Whom*? All the people? Prosecute the Houses and the Cottages? *Whom* are they to spit out their venom against? They can no more efface the impression from the minds of the people than they can recall yesterday. They can scarcely render the Boroughmongers *more hateful* than they are, or, rather, *more hated* and *detested*; but, I am very sure, that they cannot render them *less hated* and *detested*. What, then, is the use of their *prosecuting*? Talk of prosecuting indeed, after having resorted to gags, dungeons and axes! This would be like administering Senna after the bowels had resisted Mercury. The truth is, my dear Hunt, all that they have done has been in vain. They wished to disguise the fact, that they were *ruling by the force of an army*. While the war lasted, this horrid fact was easily disguised. The troops were wanted to defend the country: they were going

abroad: they were *just come home*. There was always some pretext or other. You remember well how many times we said, that it would be curious to see what pretexts would be hatched *after the war should be over*. We have now nothing to speculate upon as to this matter! It was clear to us, long ago, that there must be a Reform of the Parliament, or, that a military despotism, perfectly *naked*, must be exhibited. All that we and the people have done, is, to *strip the thing naked*. It *existed before*. It had long been in existence, and in *real operation*; but, it was not *seen*. It was her anxious desire still to keep it disguised, that created all the difficulty of Corruption. Hence all her tricks and contrivances; all her cant and all her hypocrisy. Nor did the hag wish to disguise the fearful fact from the people at large *so much as from the Soldiers themselves*! It was *their* coming at the knowledge, that SHE DEPENDED WHOLLY ON THEM: this was what the cunning and cruel crone wished to prevent; for she could not but know, that the Soldiers, after all, must consist of that class of the people, whom she daily represented as little better than brutes. Her mortification, her rage, have, in a great measure, arisen from the necessity, to which we have reduced her, of *letting out her secret to the soldiers*, who now see, that nothing of any public importance can be done *without them*! Men are generally very quick to perceive any thing that tends to heighten their opinion of their own consequence; and Soldiers are full as sharp-sighted as the rest of the world. English Soldiers have not been bred up in those notions, which render perfectly callous the hearts of the troops of old settled despotisms, where discussion is unknown and where the forms of law and the names appertaining to civil and political rights would be utterly unintelligible. The English Soldier is a rational and reasoning being. In spite of all that can be done, he will talk and think

about public matters. There is no keeping the newspapers, or the Register, from him, except by the employing of *his own bayonet* to put them down; and, when the latter has been done, the Boroughmonger has only accomplished *a change of dangers*; and, a change, too, very far from being calculated to diminish his grounds of fear.

The Manchester Lawyer may, therefore, call away upon the "Law Officers" to *prosecute*, and may continue to applaud his friend, Lord SIDMOUTH, for his "*good advice*" to the Magistrates. This *assigned Counsel* may continue to bawl; but Corruption, who is much more cunning than he, sees but too clearly the difficulty of her situation to hope to extricate herself by any common-place proceeding. She will hardly thank him for his stupid officiousness; for she well knows, that to *follow his advice* would avail her nothing. If, indeed, he could tell her how to put down and keep down the press, how to carry on a system of gags, dungeons, halters and axes, **WITHOUT THE USE OF SOLDIERS**, she would take him into her inmost bosom; but, as he cannot do this, his base calumny on me is very like to be its own reward; for, really, the fellow is too contemptible to be entitled to any particular mark of censure or reprobation on the part of the public.

Mr. DENMAN is, in these Reports, represented as having set out, in his "*defence*" of BRANDRETH, by stating, that he cordially agreed in *every word* that had been uttered by his "*learned friend*", CROSS; and STODDART, actually makes this gentleman accuse both you and me by name*. If this be correct, all that I have to say about the matter, is, that *every word*,

which I have written respecting the conduct of Cross, I beg Mr. Denman to have the complaisance to *take to himself*.

It must have struck all impartial persons as a singular thing, that, while the several hirelings of all sorts, reckon amongst the proofs of the *treason* of the poor men, the facts that they had actually proposed to form a new government, of which *Sir Francis Burdett* and *Major Cartwright* were to be leading men; while the hirelings state this, they say not a word against these two gentlemen, but transfer, by wonderful slight of hand, all the charges of *instigation to you and me!* If our names had been found upon the list of "the new government", that would, indeed, have formed no just ground of inference, that we had caused the parties to act; but, what a monstrous perversion of intellect must prevail before it could be thought right to sink all imputations against men, whose names were on the list, and to direct imputations, and even charges of instigation against men, whose names, as far as these proceedings show, the prisoners had never heard of! But, the truth is, these bloody men, do us honour in this. They show by this, that they *fear us*; and, indeed, they do fear us, even to the knocking of knees and the chattering of teeth. If they knew Major Cartwright as well as I have the honour to know him, they would never cease to fear him as long as he is able to wag pen or tongue. But, they have now seen too much not to be convinced, that they have nothing to fear from Sir Francis. The carousing of the latter with the placemen and boroughmongers of Ireland, and the dancings and paradings amongst crowds of baronial slaves; a knowledge of these must have put an end to all the fears that Corruption ever entertained as to the conduct of Sir Francis Burdett, who may, perhaps, for one more session, *talk big*; but who will never do any one thing that shall be really injurious to Corruption. The news-

* This, as afterwards appeared, was a wilful misrepresentation of Stoddart, or some such worthy. Mr. DENMAN did not ascribe the Riot (or Treason, as by excellence it was called) to the stimulation of Mr. Cobbett or Mr. Hunt, but repeatedly declared that "Spies and Informers created the mischief which they were employed to detect." W. J.

papers say, that one of the Derby victims had been a *Parliamentary Deputy*: one of those very *Deputies*, who, as you well know, were called together by an invitation under the hand of Sir Francis himself. The *Courier* of the 16th of October speaks of this circumstance in the following words, which I particularly notice because of the weight which appears to have been attached to it, and because of the new use which appears to have been made of it upon this occasion. "It is also a remarkable circumstance, and affords an additional proof of the necessity of a watchful vigilance on the part of the police of the country, that places of religious worship have been chosen for the assemblage of the friends of sedition, as a cloak to their malicious designs, and as a more certain mode of disguising their real intentions. This fact has been established by the admission of several of the accused. It may likewise be mentioned, that one of the individuals included in the present indictment for High Treason, attended the meeting of Delegates in London, for the alleged purpose of promoting a 'radical and rational Reform in Parliament.' The proceedings of that body, which took place publicly, were made known through the medium of the press; what might have transpired privately, is of course unknown; but the fact of the same person being found as the leader of a body of men, actually in arms against the peace of this country, at a subsequent period, leads to suspicions not very favourable to him, or to the body of which he is a member."

Were it not for the consequences, which have resulted from these scandalous machinations, one must laugh out-right at *religious* sedition! This will certainly scare you away from *Church*! When I return, I must shun *persons* and all religious people for fear of being suspected of plotting against the state. What think you of

a *Magdalen Society*, or a *Religious Tract Society*, upon a large scale! Or of a *School-Society*, or some such thing! Perhaps a *Bible Society*, with a good extensive circle of *Auxiliary Societies*, might be the best. We need no other books than the *Bible* and *Prayer-Book*. There are plenty of plots, and of examples of attacking and killing tyrannical rulers. An *Agricultural Society* would not do. The fellows who frequent them are too great fools to be let into a secret. But, only think of the state, in which Corruption must be, when she can see plots and conspiracies in *Churches* and *Meeting Houses*! Only think of the enormous guilt, and of the dread of just judgment, that can make her fear that people should assemble even in the places of Divine Worship! I should not be much surprised if she were to endeavour to shut them all up.* Depend upon it, she will play some pretty pranks before she has done. A dozen or two of good clever fellows to go round, during the next Summer and Autumn, to *horse-races* and *fairs*, with an exhibition of a *Boroughmonger* disputing with the Devil, and *Lawyer Cross* as *Judge*. Any thing of this sort would frighten Corruption out of her wits. We should have *Bartlemy fair* and *Puppet-shows* and *Punch* and the Devil, all driven into the dungeon together. It would be good to see a *King's Messenger* come and take *Punch* into custody for treason against the *Prince* of the Powers of the Air. "Pull Devil! Pull Baker!" Instead of *Baker*, the show-man might put *Boroughmonger*, and then have *STEWART*, or some more noted knave, if there be such, to assist him. How the fellow's

* She has resolved to try the other extreme first. Instead of shutting up the churches, to erect a great many more. After that, she will shut them all up, perhaps; or, it may be, pull them all down: which would be a natural, and at the same time, a magnificent improvement on that original conception of a Remedy, "digging holes one day, and filling them up the next."

show-shop would be crowded! It would be very easy to set such a thing going at Portsdown or Weyhill fair. In the history of Telemachus there is a horrid picture of the *fears of tyranny*, exhibited in the story of Pygmalion; but, that picture, though charged with all the horrors that a very eloquent man of great and fertile imagination was able to give it, does not exceed the reality in the case of the Boroughmongers; who appear never to sleep; who look as if they saw curses in all the movements of our features; and whose actions plainly indicate a desire to rip out our very hearts to come at our thoughts. What a life to lead! To walk about, conscious that the air which encircles them, and which they breathe, is charged with the execrations of the people! Yet, thus they will and they must walk, until the people obtain their indisputable rights.

But, to return to our poor brother *Deputy*, or *Delegate*, you will have observed, that the seekers for blood have never ceased to harp upon this Meeting of *Delegates*, as they persist in calling them, though they called themselves *Deputies*. The design of this name is evident enough; but it is no matter. I have before, in one of my letters to Mr. HALLETT, fully explained the origin, progress, and end of this Meeting of Deputies; but, as one of them has here become a *victim*, and as part of the charge against him is made to consist of his having been a *deputy*, I will here speak of that Meeting once more.

In September 1816, Major Cartwright communicated to me by Letter, a circular paper, which was about to be issued by the Hampden Club, of which Sir Francis Burdett was perpetual Chairman. This paper invited cities, towns, and other petitioning bodies, to send each, one or more Deputies to meet in London, in the next Spring, there and then to discuss the heads of a Bill, intended to be presented to parliament, for a Reform in the Commons' House. This circular

invitation was signed "F. BURDETT, "Chairman," in a printed *fac-simile* of his hand writing. Upon receiving this communication; or, at least, in some days (perhaps *twenty*, however) afterwards, I wrote to Sir Francis, exhorting him not to proceed in any such measure, and stating, at considerable length, my *reasons* for the exhortation, always coming to the conclusion, that such a Meeting *might do harm*, and could not possibly, as far as I could see, *do any good*. This letter was sent off sometime in October; and, Mr. HALLETT being then at Townhill, I showed it to him before I sent it off. In order, that Major Cartwright might know what I had done, I requested Sir Francis to send my letter itself to the Major, which he did. In the last week of October, Sir Francis enclosed me a letter from the Major to him, containing an answer, point by point, to my letter; combatting all its objections, and coming to a conclusion, that the Deputies ought to meet. This letter of the Major was enclosed in one from Sir Francis, which contained only a few words, but which words signified *his assent to the Major's opinion*. When you heard of the thing, which was soon afterwards, you were for openly expressing disapprobation of it; but, I remember, that we agreed, at last, that it was best to say nothing about it, seeing that the thing was not likely to take place.

However, in the month of January, just before the Meeting of Parliament, the Deputies, by some means or other, were called up to London. But, so far was I from partaking in this act of calling them, that I did not know of it, 'till it was done. On the day of the Meeting, I was prevailed on by you and Mr. HULME to become a Deputy for Westminster. You had consented, both of you, to act, merely because it was impossible to prevent the Meeting, and because you might be able to avert mischief, it being very easy to see, as we all along had seen, that such a Meeting, at such a crisis,

would present a most desirable mark for the shafts of Corruption.

Well! The Meeting took place; a deputation from the Hampden Club brought us the *Heads of a Bill* to consider of; and, *Sir Francis Burdett's Brother was one of that deputation*. The discussion took place. All was *open*. All was free. The Deputies agreed upon the principles of the Bill; but, they, with high compliments bestowed on him, left the details to Sir Francis, on whom they relied to bring the Bill forward. There was a Meeting of the Deputies the next day; and, the day after that, they were *wholly dissolved*, on the motion of Mr. HULME, seconded by you.

Thus, then, all that we had to do with this Meeting was to prevent it from doing mischief and to dissolve it. We had nothing to do in the calling of it. That was the act of Sir Francis Burdett, and, it was against both our wishes and against my advice.

Now, far am I from saying, that it was *wrong* to call this Meeting. It was perfectly lawful. It was done openly and fairly, and with the best possible designs. And, when it became merely a question of *prudence*, and had the support of a man like Major Cartwright, it would have been presumption in me, or in you, to persevere in an Opposition to it. It is not, therefore, of his having *called* the Meeting that I accuse Sir Francis Burdett; it is of having *abandoned* the Meeting when he saw it attacked before his face; it is of having by words indirectly, as well as by silence at other times, *acquiesced* in the foul and atrocious calumnies uttered by Corruption against this Meeting. He heard this Meeting attacked in the speeches of our foes at the opening of the Parliament; he saw this Meeting making the grandest figure in the Report which called for dungeons and gags; he saw it held up as a sure and certain sign of a plot to subvert the government; he heard it called the focus of an organized rebellion: and, like the "dumb dogs," mentioned in

Scripture, not a sound did he utter to save its members from the torments, prepared for them by the Borough-mongers.

The general effects of this abandonment I have before pointed out; but, as to the Deputies themselves, how fatal has it been! BENBOW, MITCHELL, BAMFORD, and several others, are now, or were 'till very lately, in dungeons; and, I dare say, upon no ground other than that of their having been active Deputies; because, if there were any *real* ground, or any *colourable* ground, of accusation, they would be tried, hanged, beheaded and quartered, as we have seen in the case of the poor men at Derby. One of these men, the COURIER says, was a *Deputy*; and, says the dealer in blood, "we do not know what may have taken place privately in that body; but, the fact of *one of them* being found in open rebellion, afterwards, leads to suspicions not very favourable to him, or to the body of which he was a Member." Thus, before the trial, was this circumstance to be levelled against the life of this man! Thus, in part, was this man to be found guilty of treason for having really and truly done no more than attend upon the summons of Sir Francis Burdett, who, whatever change may have taken place in his opinions; how much soever he may disapprove of the principles which he professed a year ago; still when he saw, as he must have seen, attempts making against the lives of his poor Deputies upon the ground of their having been Deputies, ought he not to have torn himself away from the sweet nosegay processions of Ireland and have flown to Derby, there to offer his countenance and the support of his purse to these unfortunate men? Ought he not to have taken care that they had *able counsel*, *bold counsel*; and, ought he not to have assisted at those consultations, where his opinions would have been of so much use? But, indeed, ought he not to have prevented *all* the cruelty that has

taken place? To his neglect I have no hesitation to ascribe all the riots and all the imprisonments in dungeons. If, when the Deputies and Hampden Clubs were first mentioned by our traitorous foes, he had risen in his place and said: "Sir, if there be any plotting, or any treason, in these, I am the grand plotter, I am the principal traitor. It was I, who, under my own handwriting, called the Deputies together. My Brother was present at the Meeting. The Meeting discussed the matters which I caused to be propounded to them. Their proceedings were open and without disguise. The result of their deliberations I hold in my hand, and it is such as I not only approve of, but am, at all times, ready to defend. As to the Hampden Clubs, I not only long have been, but I am to this hour, the standing Chairman of the Principal Club, and the Clubs in the country have been established, not only with my full approbation, but in consequence of my direct instigation, I having sent, with a letter written by myself, a Missionary through a great part of England and Wales for the express purpose of inviting the people to form themselves into such Clubs. In both these cases I have acted legally; neither I nor any of my followers have done, in these respects, any thing wrong. We have, on the contrary, only discharged our duty to our country. I am ready to substantiate this at your bar by a multitude of witnesses, and by the books and papers of the Meetings and Clubs; and, if the House refuse to hear and see these, it is manifest that it is resolutely bent on establishing a despotism on the ruins of the constitution of England. But, at any rate, let it always be borne in mind, that, if there be treason in establishing and attending these meetings and clubs, I, FRANCIS BURDETT, am the principal traitor; and, let those who are now meditating a mortal blow against the people of England, strike me first, or, let them stand recorded as cowards as well as tyrants."

Now, does not every man *feel*, that a speech like this: short, plain, honest, and resolute, would have checked the progress of the dungeon-men? My firm belief is, that, if such a speech had been made, it would have excited such confidence in the people, and such doubts and hesitations in the minds of the dungeon-men, that none of the revolutionary bills would have been proposed. Of course, I believe, that all the rioting, all the pretended plots, all the spyings, and all the puttings to death are to be ascribed to this neglect of duty on the part of Sir Francis Burdett. I care nothing for big talk and professions and protestations. It was very easy to quote Scripture against WILBERFORCE, and to remind him, that a sentence of eternal fire would be pronounced against those who had *not visited the imprisoned*. The occasion rendered this inapt and far-fetched; for, the question before the House was not, whether men should be *visited in prison*, but whether they should be *imprisoned at pleasure*. Now, however, the passage of Scripture becomes apt enough; and, I should be glad to know from Sir Francis, since he chooses to appeal to the Gospel, whether *he* has visited the poor Deputies during their imprisonment, and whether he has fed, or cloathed, their starving, shivering, and afflicted wives and children?

There are many other things, connected with the Derby trials, that I must notice in a future Letter. In the meanwhile, I am satisfied, that you will neglect nothing that can be done by you, in order to secure a record of the names and places of abode of all the parties, who have had any concern in these trials.

In the most anxious wishes for the health of you and of every one belonging to you, I remain

Your faithful friend,
And most obedient servant,
WM. COBBETT.

P. S. I have no news yet about "The People's Memorandum Book," which I, some months ago, expressed an anxious wish to see compiled by some one in England. Every day's events

render the compilation more and more desirable. The names of all the Members of the *Pitt Clubs* should be inserted, especially if they act as *Presidents or Stewards* at the Meetings. In the COURIER of the 4th of November, you will see an account of a ferocious gang, under this appellation, drinking, with *loud cheers*, "The immortal memory of Mr. *Percival!*—Old *Blucher!*—The *Derby Juries!*!"—All the names that can be got at of a gang like this should be preserved.—My idea is, a book, in which, alphabetically arranged, should be inserted the *name, calling, and place of usual abode* of every man, high or low, rich or poor, bad or good, who has made any conspicuous figure, or done, or suffered, any thing worth note, in Great Britain, or Ireland, since the 1st day of November, 1816; so as to include your first *oration* in *Spa-fields*, which has produced more effect in the world than all the orations of *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*. Some farmers, were, by their own desire, introduced to me this morning. They asked after *you* with the familiarity of old acquaintances. An Italian told me the other day, that, about eight months ago, he read in an Italian Gazette, published at VENICE, that *I had left England for America*. But, what has pleased me most, in this way, is an article in the COURIER of the 20th of October, copied from a *Prussian* news-paper, published at BERLIN. It is as follows:

" BERLIN, OCT. 1, 1817.—A strange disposition to complain of their Governments now prevails every where among the people. The more mild and moderate the authority of the State, the more extravagant are the subjects in their demands. It is common enough to meet with malecontents here. Our citizens exclaim against the quartering of soldiers which occurs at the time of the great military reviews; but this practice has existed since the reign of Frederick II. and the burden it occasions is well alleviated by the compensation of four groschens per day, which the Government allows for

" each soldier. The Landwehr who are summoned to the review are not exempt from insubordination. Dissensions prevail between that corps and the army of the line which may yet become more serious. The officers of the line can see no safety for the State except in a numerous well disciplined army: the others, on the contrary, would have no army. Their system is to say, that that has no need of any other system but itself in order to defend the State in the case of necessity. Those employed in civil and military offices have no better understanding with each other. Our Opposition Party, as far as it exists, (and where, unfortunately, is not now such a party?) has its HUNTS and COBBETTS, who will not fail to interfere in all differences, for the purpose of inflaming and aggravating them; but the hope of honest men reposes in the wisdom of the Prince who governs us, and in the usefulness of his councils. A just and firm Government triumphs, and will always triumph over the enemies of public tranquillity."

I wonder how it is, that these reptiles of the news-papers do not perceive, that, in their attempts to vilify, they always exalt the object! Every thing that these wretches put into print is read by *contraries*. And is this any wonder, after all the monstrous lies, in which we have detected them, and after all the out-cry and clamour that they have made about us. Corruption may gnaw her own flesh down to the bone for mortification; but, these are the effects of her own works, and she cannot now undo those effects. It is the nature of injustice and malignity and envy to defeat themselves in the end; and, thus have these men, in their endeavours to render you infamous, greatly assisted to render you famous. The motive of Sir Francis Burdett, who refused to carry a petition, merely because he was to be accompanied by *you*, most signally counteracted itself, by leaving you to do the thing yourself and in doing it to give a proof of your capacity, prudence, and courage.—I, who know, that you never

had any but *loyal* views; who know, that you never had any unjustifiable ambition; who know, in short, that the *public good* has always been the object nearest your heart, cannot help rejoicing to see your reputation established and extended; and, I most anxiously hope, that, even before a Reform shall take place, I shall see you in *Parliament*. That however, is of less consequence than the preservation of your *health*. Take care of that, and leave Corruption to nod and totter for a little longer. Every thing now existing, or in prospect, tends to her destruction. The props are failing her on every side. And, by-and-by, all in good time, she comes down with a mighty crash and rumbles into rubbish amidst the shouts of millions. The COURIER says, that there was a contest, at the *theatre* at Derby, where the *respectable* people were for "God save the King," but, the "*Lower Orders*," were for "*Give me Death or Liberty*." You were present, I dare say. The COURIER, in answer to some other paper, says, that this was *no trifling occurrence*, but an indication of *serious and settled opinion*; and I agree, for once, with the COURIER, though I cannot easily perceive the *wisdom* of these men in constantly representing the *great body of the people as being implacably opposed to the government*; for, if this be really so, what, *in the end*, is to save this same government? The army is all that is left; and the army is, and must be, composed of these very "*Lower Orders*". This, it appears to me, is the *rub*! To represent the great mass of the physical force of the country as being hostile to the government is, it seems to me, very foolish, unless the writers themselves are, at bottom, hostile to the government. However, thus it always is: "those whom God intends to destroy, he first makes foolish," which is a saying as old as the hills between Everly and Marlborough.—The *Proclamation* of the 27th of November has just reached me. I mean the Prince Regent's *Proclamation*, declaring that he will remain *neutral* as to the struggle in South America, and *forbidding his Majesty's*

subjects to serve in the armies or ships of either of the parties, on pain of his Majesty's *high displeasure*.—It would, of course, give any of us very great *pain* to incur his Majesty's displeasure; but, this will not prevent British Subjects from taking service in the ships and armies of the Spanish Colonies, I can assure you. Some men will be frightened by this threat; but the war will go on, and all those who take a just and brave part in it, will be loaded with both wealth and honour.—I told some South American Gentlemen, five months ago, what would be the course that the Borough-mongers would pursue; and I have been recently telling Major Cartwright, that they would be so puzzled about this matter as to be driven almost mad. Fifty times over I have said to him, that they would be afraid to declare *for* the Colonies because they must thereby give a mortal stab to *Legitimacy*; and that they would not DARE to declare *against* the Colonies!!! Some politicians in *this country* have feared, or affected to fear, that, if the Congress moved in favour of the Colonies, it would lead *to war with England*. "No! no! no!" I have said. "The English nation are *for* the Colonies; and the Borough-mongers *dare not*, *cannot*, stir one inch *against* the Colonies." — I exhort the brave South Americans also to believe this, and to bear it in mind.—I shall shortly PROVE, to the satisfaction of every living rational being, that it is IMPOSSIBLE for the Borough-mongers to stir a hair's breadth in hostility to the Spanish Colonies.—Their dismal, bankrupt accounts; their *avowed insolvency*; the *confession of their inability to stir in WAR*: these have just reached me; and I shall take care to make them reach the public.

NOTIFICATION TO CORRESPONDENTS IN ENGLAND.

From London and from various parts of the country, I have just received here a large packet of letters through the channel of MR. JACKSON. Being here in a situation not affording me the usual conveniences of home,

and the aid of the expeditious pens that I have the command of there, I cannot, until my return to Long Island, answer the greater part of these letters, otherwise than by observing, that every one of them shall be duly attended to, and that every thing that I am able to do, or to induce others to do, shall be done for every man, woman, or child, whose case has been made known to me, and who has suffered under the lash of the Boroughmongers.—I am extremely gratified by a letter from a friend of MR. BENBOW.

“ Stone walls do not a prison make,
“ Nor iron bars a cage.”

Some few friends here have collected the 20 guineas for Mr. BENBOW, who, as I now learn, has an amiable wife and children.—From what I have heard, I fear that the spy, OLIVER, induced Mr. MITCHELL to act foolishly. But, he has a wife and children. “ *They have committed no treason*,” as Sir Thomas Moore, while his head lay on the block, said of the hairs of his beard. And, therefore, *by the first day of June next*, I will take care, that they shall receive a sum not under *ten guineas*.—It gives me inexpressible satisfaction to hear of the *unshaken fortitude* of the State Prisoners. If any of them should be released, my advice to them is **TO REMAIN IN ENGLAND**, for the *present* at least. We must have **JUSTICE**. And, after all their sufferings, to share in the triumphs of justice is their due. — However, they shall hear more from me on this subject. — There is one worthy man in particular, whose letter is dated, 12th of October, 1817, who gives me a most eloquent description of his horrible treatment, and that of his “ *brave companion*.” I do not think it prudent to *name* parties here; but this worthy man may

rest assured, that I admire his sentiments, and that no effort of mine shall be wanting to assist him, and to obtain justice for him.—I hope he has the *names* of all the parties he complains of.—If Sir Francis Burdett had, as was his duty, *visited these prisoners*, they need not have had all this trouble in applying to me! However, I will do *my duty*. I will never expend a penny upon myself, beyond what is absolutely necessary, as long as a single soul of these *injured* people are in want, arising from their imprisonment on account of their labours in the cause of Reform.—I am making a *well-arranged collection of all the facts thus transmitted to me*; and, I should die with grief if I did not confidently look forward to the day, when I shall be able to bring these facts forward *in the very place whence the cruel measures issued*.—Let every one write to me (through the publisher), whether it be wife, relation, or friend of the imprisoned, or oppressed. Let *hope* animate them! Let them believe, that *no effort is lost*. Things **MUST CHANGE**.—I read of an *Act of SUICIDE* by one of the *State Prisoners*! I hope, that I shall receive a clear *elue to that matter especially*. *Name, date, jailor's name, place, description of treatment*: all these I want.—Finally, let every one rest assured, that no communication made to me, shall ever be used to the danger of the party.—Mrs. Evans's account of the *keeping back of her Husband's Petition* is valuable. I dare say she will find *no Member* to call the parties to account, until Mr. HUNT, or I, shall be in parliament.—The *act of SUICIDE*, or *pretended suicide*, whichever it may be, is, observe, a *very important matter!!!*

The next Register will contain a second Address from Mr. Cobbett to the Freemen of Coventry.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

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